



Vermont Department of Labor

Press Release

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For Immediate Release

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The Vermont Department of Labor Announces State Extended Unemployment Benefits in Vermont

The Department of Labor announced today that it will begin paying Federal-State extended unemployment compensation program benefits (EB) next week. EB provides an additional 13 weeks of unemployment compensation to eligible unemployed workers. Vermont is joining 26 other states that have triggered on the EB program.

Currently Vermont's three month average unemployment rate is 7.03 percent. An EB period exists in a state when the three month average unemployment rate exceeds 6.5 percent or the percentage of insured workers receiving benefits. While Vermont triggered into an EB period on March 22, 2009, payment of EB was delayed as Governor Douglas elected to continue paying Federal emergency unemployment to those that qualify for the additional benefits.

"Given the federal benefits are scheduled to be available through the end of the year, it just made sense to continue paying them" said Patricia Moulton Powden, Commissioner of the Vermont Department of Labor. Those qualifying for the federal emergency benefits upon exhausting their Regular unemployment can receive up to an additional 20 weeks of 100% federally funded benefits. As long as the federal emergency benefits are available, Vermont will continue to pay them before EB to qualifying individuals.

Normally the cost of the EB program is split equally between the federal unemployment trust fund and the state's employers. However, the federal government will pick up 100 percent of the cost through December of 2009 as part of the stimulus bill for most employers. If former government employees receive EB, the state government or town will continue to pay its share of benefit cost. "Stimulus funding for 100% of the EB costs for 2009 is very helpful to Vermont given the health of our unemployment insurance trust fund" commented Commissioner Powden. "We are on our own to cover these costs after 2009 which exacerbates the current problems with our trust fund running out of money," she added.

Unemployed workers who have exhausted 26 weeks of regular benefits and 33 weeks of federal emergency benefits are potentially eligible for EB. The department is sending the 1000 potentially eligible workers a notice advising them to call their closest Department of Labor Career Center to arrange an appointment for orientation to the EB program. A list of our Career Centers is available on our website at www.labor.vermont.gov or by calling 1-800-423-6181.

In addition to having exhausted all other unemployment benefits, to be eligible for EB a worker must be determined to have a good prospect of returning to work and must make a rigorous search for work each week. Federal law requires that workers present tangible evidence of their efforts to find employment each week before receiving the benefit. The department is asking workers to file weekly claims and their work search reports over the Internet to avoid delays. "The work search and reporting requirements are much stricter for EB than regular unemployment insurance due to the additional duration" commented Commissioner Powden. "Our career resource centers are geared up to assist Vermonters with these more stringent requirements and folks will be required to come in to our 12 offices statewide."

For more information on EB, please visit our website at www.labor.vermont.gov.

Equal opportunity is the law. The State of Vermont is an Equal Opportunity / Affirmative Action Employer. Applications from women, individuals with disabilities, and people from diverse cultural backgrounds are encouraged. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. 711 (TTY/Relay Service) or (802) 828-4203 TDD (Vermont Department of Labor).